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ABSTRACT

This book offers a comprehensive history of adult education in the United States from the colonial period to the present day. Chapter 1 discusses definitions of adult education and explores formative influences. Chapters 2-3 on the colonial and post-Revolutionary periods trace an Atlantic information network, rise of a literate culture, Puritan impact, and evolution of regulated access. Chapters 4-9 cover the early national and antebellum periods through the Civil War: the educational aspirations of independence; spread of literacy; innovations (mechanics' institutes, lyceums, and a professionalizing process); organized labor's response; women's adult education; and the "civilizing mission" of Native American education. Chapters 10-12 cover the following aspects of the period from the end of the Civil War through the end of World War I (WWI): institutional innovations; creation of an agricultural education system; training for industrial work; initiatives for social change; and methods to cope with the new urban, industrial, and immigrant society. Chapters 13-15 cover the following through WWII: expansion of institutions to foster learning and education, growing importance of the workplace, educational initiatives guided by visions of a better society, and adult education during national emergencies. Chapters 16-18 describe adult education's continuing institutionalization through the 1980s, social issues and civic concerns, and a national agenda for adult education. A concluding chapter addresses responsiveness to the needs of all learners. Contains 601 references and name and subject indexes. (YLB)

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